for mature readers

ZEN
INTERGALACTIC NINJA

FIRST COMICS

No. 01

Steve STERN Marat MYCHAELS

HARD BOUNTY

MAGISTRATE'S OFFICE

I HAULED KORBAX'S SORRY, HALF-DEAD CARCASS INTO THE LOCAL MAGISTRATE'S OFFICE AT THE MINING OUTPOST ON CAPRA-2, ONE OF THE ROWDIER FRONTIER PLANETS IN THE MANDAGOR SYSTEM. IT DIDN'T GET MUCH ROWDIER THAN THAT.

THIS ONE DEAD OR ALIVE?

ABOUT HALF AND HALF.

WHAT'S WITH YOU, ZEN?

WHAT DO YOU MEAN, WHAT'S WITH ME? JUST DOING MY JOB.

NOW PAY UP.

THIS IS THE THIRD BOUNTY YOU'VE BROUGHT IN HERE EITHER COMPLETELY DEAD OR MOSTLY DEAD.

YOU CAN THANK ME BY HAVING YOUR FLUNKY PAY ME.

HERE YOU GO, MR. ZEN. TEN THOUSAND CREDS.

IT'S JUST *ZEN.*

WHY DON'T YOU JUST ARREST HALF THE POPULATION OF THIS BURG AND SAVE YOURSELF A LOT OF BOTHER? NOT TO MENTION MONEY.

THAT'S REALLY *HILARIOUS*, MR. –UH, *ZEN*.

I COULD'VE TURNED RIGHT AROUND AND STARTED ANOTHER HUNT, BUT I WAS IN NEED OF SOME SERIOUS R AND R.

EXCEPT IT WASN'T GOING TO BE IMMEDIATELY FORTHCOMING.

HEY–YOU!

ZEN!!

YOU KILLED OUR *BROTHER.*

JUDGING BY YOUR GENERAL LEVEL OF *UGLINESS*, LET ME GUESS: *KORBAX.*

YES I DID...

...OR HE WOULD'VE KILLED *ME.*

WE'VE *HEARD* ABOUT YOU, ZEN. YOU'RE THE BADDEST BADASS *BOUNTY HUNTER* IN THE GALAXY.

ONLY IN THE *GALAXY?* YOU'RE *OFFENDING* ME, UGLY.

I WOULDN'T DO THAT IF I WERE YOU...

WHY NOT? THERE'S FIVE OF US, AND ONE'A *YOU.*

I DON'T HAVE ANY BEEF WITH YOU. AND IF IT MEANS ANYTHING, I'M *SORRY* ABOUT YOUR BROTHER.

BUT HE DID *KILL* FIVE PEOPLE IN COLD BLOOD BEFORE I BROUGHT HIM DOWN.

FRAG YOU, BLUESKIN!

DON'T...

SOMETIMES I WISH I DIDN'T HAVE THE KIND OF *REPUTATION* I'VE EARNED.

RIAM RIAM BLAM

FWOOM

UGH!

UFF!

FWOOM

BUT IF YOU'RE GONNA DO A JOB, DO IT *WELL*.

FWOOM

FWOOM

THEY'D ALL RECOVER FROM THE PHOTON-BLASTS...EVENTUALLY.

I TOOK THE T-POD UP TO THE HYPERSHIP. THE 'POD'S MY PERSONAL PLANET-HOPPING CONVEYANCE AND RESPONDS TO MY MENTAL COMMANDS—AT LEAST MOST OF THE TIME.

THE HYPERSHIP'S MY CLASS-M CRUISER THAT CAN JUMP THROUGH WORMHOLES WHEN NECESSARY AND FIRE ITS PHOTON TORPEDOES, ALSO WHEN NECESSARY.

AS USUAL, ***TINHEAD*** WAS WAITING FOR ME. HE'S YOUR BASIC PAIN-IN-THE-BUTT ROBOTIC MANSERVANT WHO THINKS—OR MAYBE THAT'S ***PROCESSES***—THAT I COULDN'T EXIST WITHOUT HIM.

BELIEVE ME, I COULD.

I SEE YOU'VE RETURNED IN RELATIVELY UNSCATHED SHAPE.

I'VE LEARNED TO IGNORE MOST OF WHAT HE SAYS, AND JUST TELL HIM WHAT I WANT.

I COULD USE A DRINK.

PERHAPS A NICE HOT CUP OF MENDAKI TEA.

CREAK CREAK

YOU NEED A *LUBE JOB.* YOU KNOW, EVERY TEN MILLION PARSECS.

I SUPPOSE THAT *'JOKE'* WOULD BE FUNNY...

...IF I WERE ACTUALLY TRAVERSING THAT DISTANCE UNDER MY OWN POWER.

THIS WAS THE KIND OF STUFF I HAD TO PUT UP WITH ON A DAY-TO-DAY BASIS. NO WONDER I PREFERRED GOING PLANETSIDE AND RISKING MY LIFE FOR A FEW MISERABLE CREDS ON SOME OF THE MOST DANGEROUS WORLDS IN THE KNOWN UNIVERSE.

THANKS. BUT I WAS ACTUALLY THINKING OF SOMETHING A LITTLE HARDER. BUT I GUESS THAT CAN WAIT UNTIL WE GET TO THE END OF THE UNIVERSE BAR.

< SIGH > MUST WE REALLY?

WE MUST. NOW SET A COURSE FOR THE OUTER PERIMETER.

THERE ARE A COUPLE OF WATERING HOLES OUT IN THE BIG U THAT ARE LEGENDARY, AND YOU'VE PROBABLY HEARD OF 'EM, AND YOU CAN REST ASSURED THAT I'VE QUENCHED MY THIRST IN ALL OF THEM.

BUT FOR MY MONEY, THE BEST PLACE TO KICK BACK AND RELAX AND PARTAKE OF SOME OF THE STRONGEST AND MOST EXOTIC SWILL EVER DEVISED, WHILE AT THE SAME TIME RISKING LIFE AND LIMB AMONG THE CRAZIEST BUNCH OF HOMICIDAL LUNATICS YOU'D EVER NOT WANT TO MEET - WELL, THAT'S THE END OF THE UNIVERSE BAR.

END OF THE UNIVERSE BAR

THE FACT THAT I LOVE THE PLACE SO MUCH IS A CLEAR INDICATOR THAT I'VE GOT SOME SERIOUS *ISSUES.*

MASTER SATVA, MY MENTOR, LIKES TO REMIND ME AS MUCH EVERY TIME WE COMMUNICATE, BUT THANKFULLY THAT ONLY HAPPENS WHEN I'M IN WHAT HE LIKES TO CALL THE 'CELESTIAL GARDEN OF MEDITATION'.

SATVA AND HIS FELLOW ***MASTERS*** RAISED ME ON THE PLANET OM AFTER I CRASH-LANDED THERE AS AN INFANT IN AN ORB NOT MUCH DIFFERENT FROM THE T-POD.

IT'S A LONG STORY...AND RIGHT NOW I WAS KIND OF DISCUSSING IT WITH SOMEBODY NAMED DALDOR, WHO WAS DRINKING NEXT TO ME AT THE BAR.

SO YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT PLANET YOU WERE BORN ON.

RIGHT. ALL I KNOW IS THAT MY FIRST MEMORIES ARE OF FLOATING UNDER GLASS.

WE WERE BOTH PRETTY WASTED ON PLEXAN ALE.

WHAT, YOU MEAN LIKE...IN A TEST TUBE?

YEAH. WELL, MAYBE. IT'S WEIRD.

DAMN, ZEN. THAT MEANS, LIKE, YOU COULD BE AN ARTIFICIAL LIFEFORM.

I SEEM REAL ENOUGH TO ME.

WHOA. THAT'S *BURRRP* HEAVY.

IT WAS 'HEAVY' ALL RIGHT. I WAS BORN, OR CREATED, OR WHATEVER, ***SOMEWHERE,*** THEN STUCK IN A POD AND SHIPPED OFF INTO SPACE.

IT LANDS ON THE PLANET OM, WHERE THESE PURPLE-ROBED SAVANTS WHO SIMPLY CALL THEMSELVES THE MASTERS TAKE IT UPON THEMSELVES TO RAISE ME.

THESE CHARACTERS TEACH ME THE ULTIMATE ARTS OF MEDITATION AND FIGHTING–THEY CALLED IT SELF-DEFENSE.

THEY ONE DAY TOOK ME INTO THE WOODS AND PRESENTED ME WITH A GLEAMING HYPERSHIP.

TODAY WE GIVE YOU THE NAME ***ZEN,*** AND SEND YOU OFF INTO THE UNIVERSE TO FIND YOUR TRUE ***DESTINY.***

SO FAR, MY DESTINY HAS BEEN TO WANDER THE SPACEWAYS, SOMETIMES AS A BOUNTY HUNTER, SOMETIMES ACTING AS A MERCENARY-FOR-HIRE, AND SOMETIMES JUST PLAYING IT FAST AND LOOSE AS WHAT CAN BEST BE DESCRIBED AS A SOLIDER OF FORTUNE.

IT'S ALL PRETTY MUCH THE SAME THING. AND IT WORKS FOR ME, WHICH IS ANOTHER WAY OF SAYING I'M STILL BREATHING, SO I KEEP ON DOING IT.

HEY! EITHER YOU TAKE YOUR SLIMY CLAW OFF MY SHOULDER, OR I'LL REMOVE IT FROM YOUR ARM– PERMANENTLY!

YEAH *HIC* BABY. I LIKE IT WHEN YOU TALK LIKE THAT. *HIC*

HOW ABOUT I LET MY *GUN* DO THE TALKING?

HAH! YOU CALL THAT A *GUN?*

AS A MATTER OF FACT– *I DO!*

SLAM!

THAT WAS A NICE MOVE.

THANKS. VETRUVIAN BRANDY, BARKEEP.

ANOTHER, PLEASE.

NEVER SEEN YOU HERE BEFORE, LADY. AND BELIEVE ME, I'D REMEMBER YOU. FOR ONE THING, A CLASSY DAME LIKE YOU DON'T LOOK LIKE SHE BELONGS HERE.

THANKS...

...BUT I THINK I'VE HAD QUITE ENOUGH MALE ADMIRATION FOR ONE DAY.

BUT YOU'RE RIGHT. THIS IS MY FIRST TIME IN THIS... ESTABLISHMENT. A LOT *SEEDIER* THAN I THOUGHT IT'D BE.

IF YOU DON'T MIND MY ASKIN'...WHAT BRINGS A CLASSY LADY LIKE YOU TO THESE PARTS?

I'M LOOKING FOR SOMEONE.

OH YEAH?

HEY! I'M NOT *FINISHED* WITH YOU, *BIT–*

?

?

?

WOULD IT BE TOO *'ADMIRING'* IF I ASKED YOUR NAME?

IT'S *TEELA...*

TEELA *MORAVA.*

YOU SAID YOU WERE LOOKING FOR SOMEONE...

YES. *YOU.* FROM YOUR DESCRIPTION, I'D SAY *YOU* WERE ZEN. AM I CORRECT?

WELL...

YEAH. HE'S ZEN, ALL RIGHT!

THANKS A LOT, FELLA. I LIKE TO KNOW WHY SOMEONE'S LOOKING FOR ME BEFORE I TELL THEM WHO I AM.

EVEN IF SHE IS AS BEAUTIFUL AS MISS MORAVA HERE.

IT'S *MRS.* MORAVA—BUT YOU CAN CALL ME TEELA. I AM GOING TO BE YOUR CLIENT.

CLIENT?

IT'S BEEN A PLEASURE MEETING YOU, BUT IF YOU DON'T MIND, I'D LIKE TO TALK TO YOUR FRIEND IN PRIVATE.

SURE. CATCH YA... LATER, ZEN.

SO WHAT'S THIS ABOUT?

LET'S TALK IN PRIVATE, IN MY CAR.

NIIICE.

I DON'T LIKE GETTING INTO SMALL, ENCLOSED SPACES UNTIL I'VE HAD A CHANCE TO CHECK THEM OUT.

CASE IN POINT...

HOLD IT, FELLA!

I LIKE THAT. *CAUTIOUS.*

RAZAR, THIS IS *ZEN.* PLEASE GIVE HIM THE ENVELOPE.

OF COURSE, MA'AM.

SO WHAT'S THIS ABOUT?

I LIKE THAT, TOO. *DIRECTNESS.* WHAT THIS IS ABOUT, ZEN, IS *MY SISTER.*

YAZMIN MORAVA.

THE *LATE* YAZMIN MORAVA, I'M SORRY TO SAY.

I'M SORRY...

SO AM I.

I'M ALSO *ANGRY*...

AT *THIS* MAN. *QUENTIN PALOMAR.* DOES THAT NAME MEAN ANYTHING TO YOU?

IT DOES HAVE A FAMILIAR RING.

HE'S A VERY WEALTHY, POWERFUL MAN WHO RAPED AND KILLED SEVERAL WOMEN. BUT NOT BEFORE ROBBING THEM OF THEIR PERSONAL FORTUNES.

AND LET ME GUESS...

ONE OF THEM WAS YOUR SISTER.

PRECISELY.

EVENTUALLY, HE WAS FOUND OUT, AND CAPTURED BY THE AUTHORITIES. HIS BAIL WAS SET AT *10 MILLION CREDS*, BUT HE HAD THE COLLATERAL TO POST IT.

AND THEN HE JUMPED BAIL.

NOW I REMEMBER. I'VE SEEN HIS FACE.

WANTED POSTERS.

BUT THAT WAS A WHILE AGO.

YES. HE WENT 'UNDERGROUND' TWO YEARS AGO, AND NO ONE CAN FIND HIM. BUT IF ANYONE CAN, I BELIEVE IT'S *YOU.*

TWO YEARS IS A *LONG* TIME, TEELA.

I KNOW. I'VE GRIEVED EVERY DAY SINCE. YOU SEE, THE *LAST* WOMAN HE KILLED WAS MY SISTER.

HERE'S 100,000 CREDS, AS YOUR DOWNPAYMENT.

I DON'T KNOW...

THERE'LL BE *500,000* MORE WHEN YOU BRING HIM TO ME.

FIVE--. HOLD ON. THAT'S A LOT OF MONEY.

NOT FOR ME IT ISN'T. I HAVE ONLY ONE *PROVISO:*

YOU MUST BRING HIM TO ME *ALIVE.*

NOW... WILL YOU TAKE THE *JOB?*

I'M NOT AN *IDIOT.*
AND I FELT GENUINELY BAD FOR HER.
SHE'D LOST HER SISTER TO A MAJOR-LEAGUE, PSYCHOTIC SERIAL KILLER WHOSE TRAIL HAD GONE STONE COLD, AND WHO WAS NO DOUBT LIVING IN THE LAP OF LUXURY OFF THE MONEY HE'D STOLEN FROM A STRING OF UNFORTUNATE VICTIMS.

I WAS GOING TO *ENJOY* THIS ONE.

IF I COULD FIND HIM.

OF COURSE, I HAD A *SECRET WEAPON.*

HMMM. YOU DON'T APPEAR ANYWHERE NEAR AS *INEBRIATED* AS I FEARED.

THE GUY *DOES* HAVE HIS USES.

I BELIEVE THE TERM IS–*BINGO!*

WHAT?

I'VE COMBED THE UNIVERSAL DATANET, CROSS-REFERENCING ALL OF THE INFORMATION, AND FOUND AN ITEM IN THE *WEEKLY GALACTIC NEWS* TABLOID INDICATING THAT SOMEONE CLOSELY RESEMBLING PALOMAR WAS BELIEVED TO HAVE BEEN–WHAT'S THE TERM?–*SPOTTED*–ON THE PLANET SOMALLA.

THE ITEM WAS DATED TWO STANDARD WEEKS AGO. WE MUST PROCEED THERE IMMEDIATELY.

LIKE I SAID, MY SECRET WEAPON.

SOMALLA.

IT MADE SENSE THAT PALOMAR WOULD HIDE OUT THERE. KNOWN FOR ITS TROPICAL ATMOSPHERE AND GORGEOUS WOMEN, SOMALLA WAS WIDELY REGARDED AS ONE OF THE FOREMOST *PLEASURE PLANETS* IN THE COSMOS.

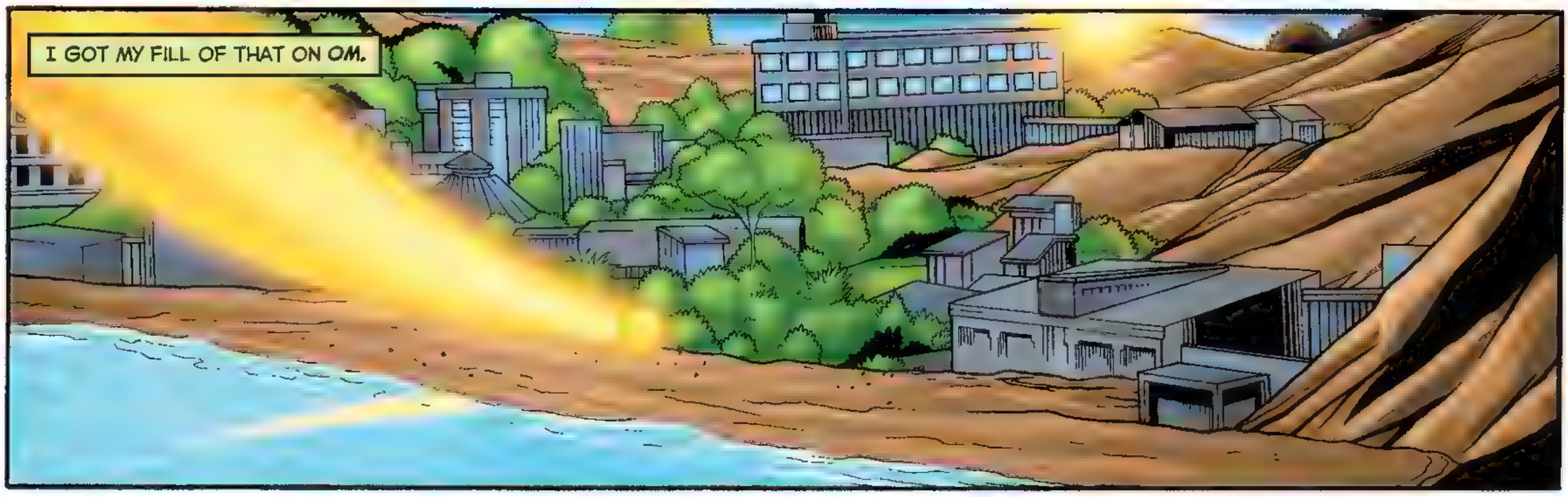
THE FREAK WAS THERE, ALL RIGHT.

I'LL TRY TO MAKE THIS FAST.

I TRUST YOU WON'T BE TOO DISTRACTED BY THE INDIGENOUS FEMALE LIFEFORMS.

THAT'S FUNNY.

ON TOP OF EVERYTHING ELSE, HE THINKS HE'S *MY MORAL COMPASS.*


I GOT MY FILL OF THAT ON OM.

THEY WEREN'T KIDDING ABOUT THE BEAUTIFUL WOMEN WHO INHABITED THIS PLANET.

EACH ONE LOOKED MORE BEAUTIFUL THAN THE NEXT.
IT WAS DISTRACTING, ALL RIGHT...

...BUT I HAD A JOB TO DO.

FIGURED I'D START WITH THE *CHIEF MAGISTRATE.*

CHIEF MAGISTRATE TAMORA?

THAT'S ME. AND *YOU,* MY FRIEND, ARE...?

THE NAME'S *ZEN.*

NICE TO MEET YOU ...ZEN.

PLEASE... HAVE A SEAT.

YOU WANT A CUP OF JAVA? THERE'S NONE BETTER THAN OURS!

WHY NOT?

YOU DRINK IT *BLACK.* THIS IS THE SWEETEST-TASTING JAVA IN THE COSMOS.

I'LL TAKE YOUR WORD FOR IT.

DON'T JUST TAKE *MINE...*

...ALL OF THE INTERGALACTIC FOOD CRITICS AGREE IT'S THE *BEST.*

MMMMMM. THIS *IS* GOOD.

I TOLD YOU. WE CALL THIS BLEND *DARK STOOL.*

STOOL? YOU MEAN, LIKE A STOOL YOU SIT ON?

NO, NO, NO. LIKE A *STOOL* WHEN YOU GO TO THE BATHROOM.

I, UH, DON'T *GET* IT...

LET ME EXPLAIN. THE *BEANS* WE USE...

...ARE PICKED FROM THE *DUNG* OF OUR SACRED *BOAR-BEASTS.*

BLEECH!

HAHAHA! YOU'RE NOT THE *FIRST* TO HAVE THAT REACTION.

LET ME EXPLAIN FURTHER. THE ENZYMES IN THE BOAR-BEAST'S STOMACH REMOVE ALL OF THE IMPURITIES FROM THE BEANS. HENCE THE SMOOTH TASTE.

I THINK I'VE HAD ENOUGH FOR THE MOMENT.

DELICIOUS, NO?

SO WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU, ZEN?

I'M LOOKING FOR SOMEONE...

BOUNTY HUNTER, RIGHT?

HOW'D YOU GUESS?

WELL, FOR ONE THING, YOU FIT THE *PROFILE*...

...AND FOR ANOTHER, THERE'S BEEN A *STEADY STREAM* OF YOU FELLAS COMIN' HERE FOR A WHILE NOW...

...ALL ON THE TRAIL OF THE SAME *BOUNTY.*

PALOMAR.

AND WHAT'S BEEN THE OUTCOME?

NONE THAT I'M AWARE OF.

SOME OF YOU FELLAS COME VISIT ME, AN' SOME DON'T. BUT ALL I KNOW IS, I HAVEN'T SEEN ANYBODY *LEAVE.*

HMMM. SO WHAT DO YOU SUGGEST?

ONLY GOT ONE THING TO SAY -*GOOD LUCK.*

THAT WAS COMFORTING.

WHEN YOU'RE LOOKING FOR *BOUNTY HUNTERS,* YOU HEAD TO THE NEAREST WATERING HOLE.

AND FROM THERE TO THE NEXT.

AND SO ON, UNTIL YOU EITHER HIT PAYDIRT OR GET TOTALLY PLASTERED. OR BOTH.

THERE'S *HIC* SOMEBODY YOU MIGHT BE LOOKIN' FOR...*QUICKSILVER.*

"THEY SAY HE USED TO BE A *HIC* BOUNTY HUNTER. NOW HE'S AN *ASSASSIN.*"

'LEAST THAT'S WHAT THEY SAY.

WELL *HIC* HE VISITS ONE'A THE GIRLS WHO LIVES UPSTAIRS KIND OF REGULAR. WORD IS HE'S SWEET ON HER.

ISHA.

THERE SHE IS *HIC* RIGHT NOW.

I COULD SEE WHY QUICKSILVER WOULD WANT TO 'VISIT' HER. SHE WAS ABSOLUTELY GORGEOUS.

WHAT ELSE YOU KNOW ABOUT HIM?

WHAT'S HER NAME?

YOU SAY HE *USED* TO BE A BOUNTY HUNTER?

AN' A DARN GOOD ONE, FROM WHAT I HEAR. *HIC*

AND NOW HE'S AN *ASSASSIN?*

THAT'S THE RUMOR.

HMMMM.

I WAS FORMULATING A THEORY, INVOLVING BOTH PALOMAR AND QUICKSILVER.

I'D TEST IT OUT LATER.

HIC LEAVIN' SO SOON?

GOT WORK TO DO. THANKS FOR THE INFORMATION.

WHAT *HIC* INFORMATION?

YOUR LUCK'S ABOUT TO RUN OUT, FELLA.

PAY UP, YOU LOSERS! *HAW!*

STAKEOUTS ARE INVARIABLY PART OF THE JOB.

...AND THEY'RE USUALLY INCREDIBLY *DULL.*

USUALLY.

STATUS REPORT, PLEASE.

HUH?

STATUS REPORT, PLEASE.

I'M BUSY RIGHT NOW.

YOU APPEAR TO BE SITTING IN THE T-POD.

IT'S CALLED DOING RECONNAISSANCE.

WHY DO YOU NEED A STATUS REPORT, ANYWAY?

YOU KNOW I KEEP A LOG. AND SOMEONE HAS TO RECORD YOUR EXPLOITS.

RIGHT. YOU'RE A REGULAR ***DR. WATSON...***

IMPRESSIVE. A LITERARY REF–

I GOTTA GO.

KLICK

IT WAS QUICKSILVER, ALL RIGHT.

WHAT THE HELL?

HELLLP!

DON'T, QUICKSILVER!

GIVE ME ONE GOOD REASON NOT TO KILL YOU!

HOW'S THIS?

YOU JUST PICKED ON THE WRONG GUY! DON'T YOU KNOW WHO I AM?

BAM

I KNOW *EXACTLY* WHO YOU ARE!

REALLY? A LAMP?

YEAH, REALLY.

KRAK

DAMN.

HAD ENOUGH?

NO!

I'M GONNA TEAR YOU APART!

SURE YOU ARE.

ISHA! WHAT'S GOING ON IN THERE?

SONUVA-UGGH!

WHAM

HAD TO MAKE THIS FAST.

OPEN THE DOOR, OR WE'LL BREAK IT DOWN!

BAM BAM

SORRY TO DISTURB YOU, MA'AM.

YOU OKAY, ISHA?

WHAT'S GOIN' ON?!

QUICKSILVER HAD BEEN EASIER TO SUBDUE THAN I'D FIGURED.

WHEN IT CAME TO HAND-TO-HAND FIGHTING, HE WAS A COMPLETE WASHOUT.

SINCE HE'D BECOME AN ASSASSIN, HE'D OBVIOUSLY RELIED ON KILLING HIS VICTIMS FROM A *DISTANCE*...

...AND PROBABLY FROM *HIDING*.

IT WAS A *COWARD'S* PROFESSION.

UHHH...

WHO THE HELL *ARE* YOU?

I'M SURPRISED YOU DON'T KNOW.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

YOU SPECIALIZE IN KILLING *BOUNTY HUNTERS*, RIGHT?

WHAT'RE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

MY THEORY IS THAT PALOMAR HIRED YOU TO TAKE OUT WHOEVER COMES HERE TO NAB HIM.

YOU *SUCK* AT LYING ALMOST AS MUCH AS YOU DO AT *FIGHTING.*

PALOMAR?

YOU'RE TESTING *MY PATIENCE.*

I DON'T KN–

COME OFF IT!

SLAPP!

YOU *DISGUST* ME, QUICKSILVER. I CAN'T STAND THE FACT THAT WE ONCE SHARED A PROFESSION.

AND THAT NOW, YOU *KILL* YOUR FELLOW BOUNTY HUNTERS FOR A SCUMBAG LIKE PALOMAR.

WHAT MAKES *YOU* SO RIGHTEOUS?

LET'S JUST SAY, I DON'T MURDER PEOPLE IN *COLD BLOOD* FOR A COUPLE OF LOUSY *CREDS.*

SO WHAT DO YOU WANT?

SIMPLE: WHERE'S PALOMAR'S HIDEOUT?

IF I TOLD YOU THAT, I'D HAVE TO KILL YOU.

HOW ABOUT I'LL KILL *YOU* IF YOU DON'T TELL ME?

I DON'T THINK—*OWWWW!*

WANT ME TO CRANK IT UP?

ZZZZAT

AGGGH! N-NOOO!

ZZZZAT

S-STOP--!

SURE--JUST AS LONG AS YOU TELL ME. BETTER YET...

...DRAW ME A *MAP.*

THERE YOU GO. NOW WHAT?

NOW I TIE YOU UP AND LEAVE YOU HERE UNTIL I RETURN WITH PALOMAR. IF THIS MAP IS *WRONG...*

OH, IT'S NOT WRONG--

--BUT YOU'RE NOT GOING TO BE ABLE TO USE IT!

NOW BACK OFF!

WHAT'S THE MATTER? AFRAID TO SHOOT A MAN WHEN HE'S *LOOKING* AT YOU?

HELL NO.

HUH?

KLIK KLIK

IDIOT SHOULD'VE REALIZED I'D REMOVED HIS CLIP.

BLAMM!

THE MAP PANNED OUT.

NICE DIGS.

PALOMAR WAS LIVING THE GOOD LIFE.

BUT NOT FOR MUCH LONGER.

ALTHOUGH IT WASN'T GOING TO BE EASY. I COULD SEE AT LEAST A HALF-DOZEN SENTRIES.

AND THERE WERE PLENTY OF BOOBY-TRAPS. NO SURPRISE THERE.

HOLD IT RIGHT THERE, BLUESKIN.

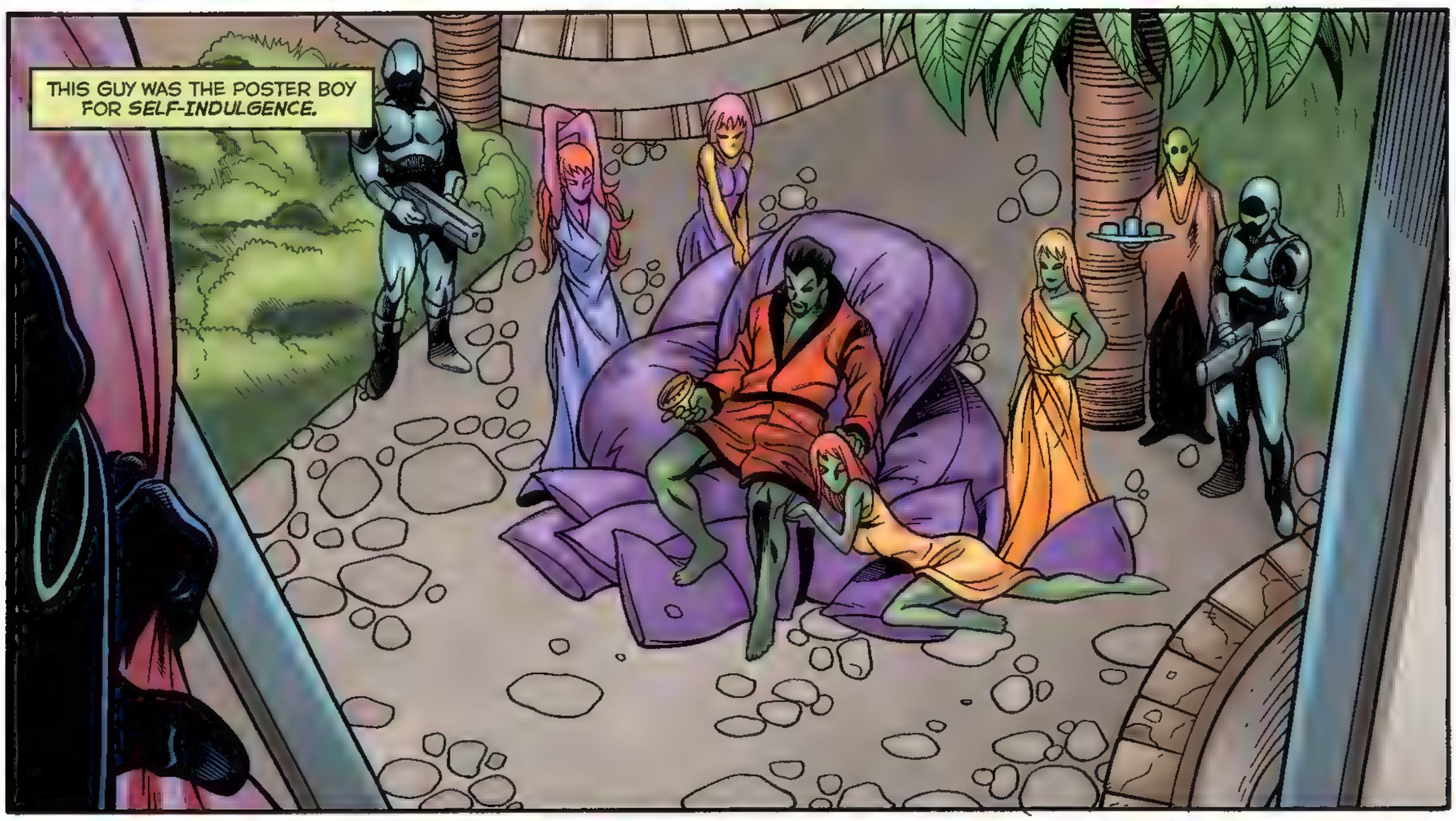
LOWER YOUR WEAPON.

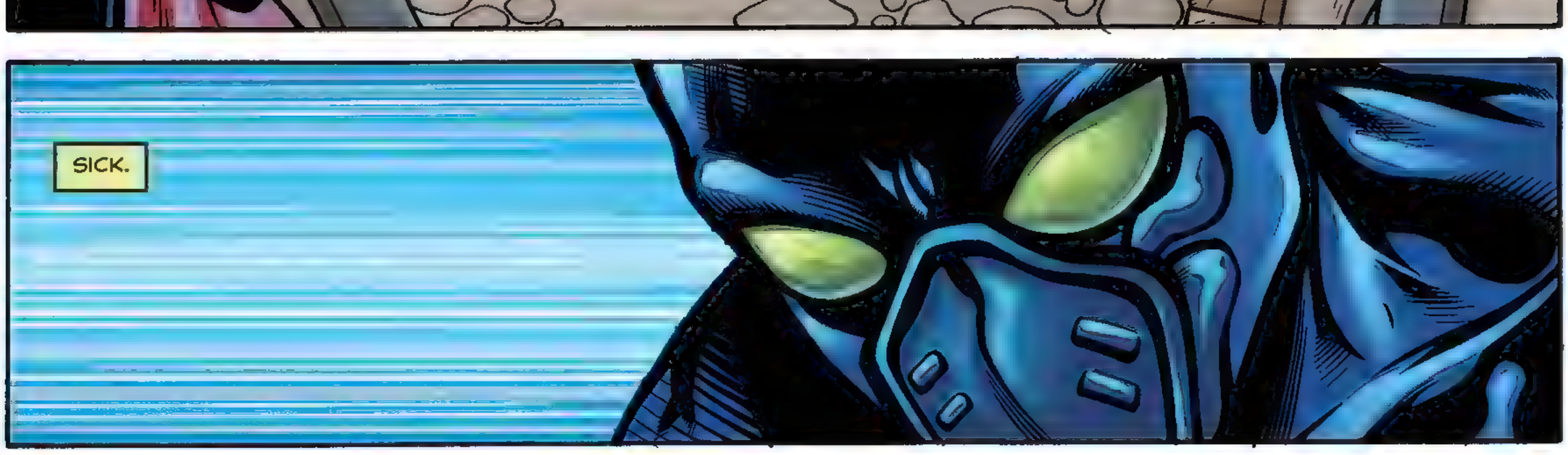
PUT IT ON THE GROUND.

ACK--!

UGH--!

FROM THE SOUND OF THINGS, PALOMAR HAD A PARTY GOING ON.


THIS GUY WAS THE POSTER BOY FOR *SELF-INDULGENCE.*


SICK.

GET HIM!

KEEP DANCING, LADIES! THIS IS JUST PART OF THE *ENTERTAINMENT!*

WHUMP

WHUMP

WHAM

WONDERFUL! AT LAST WE MEET! I'VE BEEN LOOKING FORWARD TO THIS.

CLAP CLAP CLAP

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT, PALOMAR?

YOU'RE *NUMBER ONE* ON MY *HIT LIST*, ZEN!

I FULLY EXPECTED YOU TO TAKE QUICKSILVER OUT.

BUT I'VE GOT MY OWN PLANS FOR YOU.

THAT'S FUNNY. I COULD SAY THE *SAME THING*.

TO BE CONTINUED

SON OF ULTRON

"THIS FAN... THIS MONSTER!"